

PUERTO RICO STATUS
LEGISLATION

HON. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 15, 2013

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, if we are to fairly resolve the issue of Puerto Rico's status, we must find a framework for true self-determination. The "Puerto Rico Status Resolution Act" being introduced today fails that test in every aspect: it denies Puerto Ricans a true vehicle for self-determination and fabricates a superficial majority in favor of statehood.

I think it is critical that my colleagues understand how flawed the process was for the plebiscite held in November of 2012. By rigging the process, architects of this vote effectively ensured that the outcome would be a result they desired.

It should be recognized that votes cast in favor of statehood did not exceed 44 percent—a number that has remained relatively flat for two decades. It is important to note that 26 percent of voters cast blank ballots during this part of the vote. These votes should be considered votes against statehood as casting a blank ballot is part of traditional form of objecting to an unfair process in Puerto Rican political history. Indeed, during this referendum, the Commonwealth Party adopted a resolution asking voters to protest the process by casting blank ballots. In short, even with this unfair and flawed process, 55 percent of Puerto Rican voters cast ballots unsupportive of statehood.

Despite these numbers, the bill being proposed today continues to perpetuate this unfair political gamesmanship, seeking to promote statehood at the exclusion of other potential political solutions.

Mr. Speaker, rather than inserting ourselves into the political status debate for Puerto Rico, Congress should be exploring ways to raise the quality of life for the 3.6 million American citizens who reside in Puerto Rico. By fostering economic development there, encouraging outside investment and spurring economic opportunity, we can help all Puerto Ricans enjoy a better life—while enhancing the economy of the mainland United States. Investments in education and infrastructure can make Puerto Rico a better place to live, while providing a solid foundation for future generations. Preserving the islands' natural beauty and addressing environmental justice issues is also vitally important.

These are the issues we should be tackling, rather than requiring Puerto Ricans to participate in a flawed process aimed at promoting the political goals of a minority of voters. The ultimate solution for Puerto Rico's future will be realized by creating economic opportunity and justice, investing in growth and infrastructure, not through unfair processes that seek to foreclose one option in favor of statehood.

I submit a Concurrent Resolution recently considered by the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico's legislature.

IN HONOR OF MADISON CENTRAL
INDIANS BASKETBALL TEAM

HON. ANDY BARR

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 15, 2013

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise with great pride to recognize a group of young men from Madison County in Kentucky's Sixth Congressional District, who tirelessly worked this season to accomplish what athletes across our great Commonwealth of Kentucky often dream of accomplishing during their high school tenure.

This band of brothers, the Madison Central Indians, successfully beat Ballard High School in a last-second shot to be crowned champions of the 96th Annual Kentucky High School Athletic Association (KHSAA) Sweet Sixteen Championship.

In a state where basketball is not a pastime, but a passion, our youth are raised dreaming of the sound of the crowd in the hallowed halls of Rupp Arena. This year over 17,000 fans cheered these young men to victory.

For head coach Allen Feldhaus, Jr., this championship holds a special place. The last time he was in a state championship game, it was in 1981 being coached by his father, Allen Feldhaus, Sr. Clearly the love for the basketball is a family affair that made it to the record books; this duo is the only father and son pair to have both coached in a state championship game.

Led by eight seniors, this team did what it took on the court and in the classroom. I commend the teamwork of the following men: Zach Jarvis, George Walker, Daniel Parke, Ken-Jah Bosley, Coty Alexander, Ross Ramsey, Griffin Hotchkiss, Demarcus George, Nick Kavanaugh, Kirkland Humphrey, Chris Conner, Dominique Hawkins, Hunter Stocker, John Williams, Tariq Smith, Sam Jones, Cameron Thomas, Seth Richardson, Jyre Richardson and Quan Taylor.

I would also like to congratulate Dominique Hawkins, named the 2013 Kentucky "Mr. Basketball." Dominique will be attending and playing basketball for my alma mater, the University of Kentucky in the Sixth Congressional District.

I extend my congratulations not only to the team, but to the Madison Central coaching staffs, teachers, families and fans who supported this team throughout the season and helped make this victory possible.

IN RECOGNITION OF BRIGADIER
GENERAL GARRETT S. YEE

HON. ERIC SWALWELL

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 15, 2013

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, today I recognize Brigadier General Garrett S. Yee, from Fremont, California who recently was promoted from Colonel to Brigadier General by the United States Army. I will be attending a promotion ceremony for Brigadier General Yee on May 19, 2013 at the Niles Veterans Hall. I am proud to honor Brigadier General Yee, who has served his community with excellence and has executed his role as

a public servant with professionalism, fairness, and integrity.

Brigadier General Yee was commissioned as an Infantry Officer in 1987 after graduating from Santa Clara University, where he earned a bachelor of science degree in combined science. He also obtained a master's degree in business administration from Golden Gate University and a master's degree in strategic studies from the Army War College.

Throughout his military career he has held an assortment of staff and command positions. Brigadier General Yee recently returned from Afghanistan, where he served as Deputy Commander for the 335th Signal Command from October 2011 until October 2012. During his time in Afghanistan, he provided senior leadership for all of the 335th Signal Command operations. Brigadier General Yee deployed to Iraq in 2006 as the lead Theater Observation Detachment Officer on behalf of the Center for Army Lessons Learned, which is where he authored a handbook on provincial reconstruction teams in Iraq.

Most recently, in December 2012, Brigadier General Yee became Deputy Commander for Mobilization for the Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command at Scott Air Force Base.

I want to thank Brigadier General Yee for his continued service and commitment to our country. The United States appreciates his efforts to ensure our rights and benefits are protected. I wish him the best of luck in his new position.

CONGRATULATING EAST PEORIA
SCHOOL DISTRICT 86 ON BEING
NAMED A BEST COMMUNITY FOR
MUSIC EDUCATION

HON. AARON SCHOCK

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 15, 2013

Mr. SCHOCK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate East Peoria School District 86 on being distinguished as one of the Best Communities for Music Education by the NAMM Foundation. This award recognizes excellence in ensuring that students have access to comprehensive music education, both inside and outside the classroom, and I applaud their efforts.

By making a deliberate decision to elevate diverse musical learning experiences to a priority, the teachers, faculty, and administrators of District 86 are embodying a principle that 94 percent of Americans agree with: that music is a vital part of a child's education. Study after study has shown that participation in music and arts advances student achievement in all areas of study, from math and science to English and language skills. Schools that put a priority on music education have students who are more motivated, resulting in lower dropout rates, higher standardized test scores, and thriving student body communities.

The benefits of music education go far beyond the four walls of school buildings. In a survey of top U.S. CEO's, one of the top five traits they are looking for in their workforce is creativity. Our economy needs innovative thinkers, problem solvers, and collaborative people with the ability to think outside-the-box.